

The Best Christmas Ever

The twins slept right next to me and they woke up when they heard their names called.

“What is it, Anna?” asked four-year-old Katie.

“Yeah, what’s wrong?” echoed Colleen.

“I—I just had a bad dream,” I explained, “Sorry I woke you up. Go back to sleep.”

“No,” said Colleen, “You promised that the day before Christmas Eve you’d get us a tree. Remember? I asked you a few weeks ago and you said so.”

I gulped. I had forgotten all about getting a tree for the girls. Ever since we had started living on the streets, I had found some kind of tree for Christmas.

The red string, which was now our centerpiece on the table, we had used to drape around the tree and waded-up balls of newspaper were set on the branches.

The reason I had delayed getting a tree this year was because the place where we usually got our tree was closed down and there was a big sign on the fence surrounding the place that said, “No Trespassing.” Actually, I couldn’t read, but when I had tried to get the tree before, a man had walked up to me and said, “Hey! You have to pay, girl! Don’t you see the sign that says, ‘No Trespassing?’” Ever since we started living life on the streets we had gotten a tree for free from the place. A nice lady that had seen us said that every year we could have a free tree as long as we were still living in the streets. Apparently, the man who I met this year at the gate hadn’t heard what the lady said.

“Oh, this year, I’m going to get you a really big tree. It’ll have store-bought ornaments and everything! But you have to wait until Christmas to get it. We’ll leave it up all year long and they’ll be *tons* of presents under it.”

“Wow!” exclaimed Katie.

“That’ll be *so* grand!” Colleen said, “Will it be as good as those in the rich peoples’ houses?”

“Yes,” I replied, “It’ll be the prettiest and grandest one in Brownieville!”

That night, I wondered how I was going to tell the twins that we weren’t going to have a beautiful tree. I was going to have to tell them that we wouldn’t have a tree at all.